2013 spring term

Language classes:	22 April-12 July
End-of-term examinations:	15-19 July

2013 fall term

Language classes:	9 September-29 November
End-of-term examinations:	2-6 December

II. Types of language courses

5. To help staff develop proficiency in a language, three types of language courses are offered each term: regular, accelerated and special.

Regular courses

6. Regular courses range from level 1 (beginner) to level 8 or 9 (advanced), depending on the language. The courses focus on all language skills — speaking, listening, writing, reading and interacting — and aim to develop both fluency and accuracy.

7. Regular courses meet for a total of three to four hours per week for 12 weeks, depending on the language and level. Each lesson may last one, one and a half or two hours several times a week. Courses may be offered at the following times:

Before work: at approximately 8.30 a.m.

At lunch hour: beginning at 12, 12.30, 1, 1.30 and 2 p.m.

After work: beginning around 5.30 p.m. (6 p.m. during the main part of the General Assembly session).

Accelerated courses

8. Accelerated intensive courses may be offered as an alternative to the regular programme. As an example, accelerated classes may be offered four days a week from 8.20 to 9.30 a.m. This option is not available in all languages or at all levels.

Special courses

9. In response to students' interests and needs, the Language and Communications Programme offers special courses that focus on a particular language skill, task or topic. These courses may meet for only one or two hours per week and may last fewer than 12 weeks.

III. Registration

Eligibility

10. Internal learners are United Nations staff members at all levels at Headquarters with a valid United Nations grounds pass and appointment through the end of the

term.[1] They may register for language courses free of charge and are responsible for purchasing any required textbooks or materials.

11. External learners are all other applicants, including retirees, staff from United Nations funds and programmes and delegates of Permanent Missions to the United Nations. They may be eligible to take language courses, either free of charge or for a fee, as long as they have a valid United Nations grounds pass through the end of the term for which they register.[1] Information on eligibility is available on the Language and Communications Programme registration page at www.un.org/staffdevelopment/lcp.

Priority

12. Registration applications are processed according to certain priorities (see paras. 3 and 4 of the annex to the present circular) on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of students admissible in each class is limited, and interested students should therefore register early. Once a course is full, subsequent applicants are placed on a waiting list.

Dates

13. Those eligible to take language classes may register in 2013 as follows:

2013 spring term

From 4 March 2013: Registration opens for placement tests

From 6 April 2013: Registration opens for all courses

16 April: priority ends for returning students in regular courses

26 April: last day of registration for all 12-week spring courses

2013 fall term

From 17 June 2013: Registration opens for placement tests

From 23 July 2013: Registration opens for all courses

28 August: priority ends for returning students in regular courses

13 September: last day of registration for all 12-week fall courses

14. The deadline for registration is always the last day of the first week of a course regardless of its duration and regardless of the day of the week the course starts. However, a language coordinator may decide to close registration for a course earlier when the maximum number of students allowed has been reached. If the beginning of a course is postponed, the registration deadline for that course may be postponed as well, depending on the number of students already enrolled.

[1] Students whose grounds pass expires before the end of the forthcoming term are requested to provide a letter from their supervisor or the Executive Office indicating that their contract will be extended until the end of the term. The letter must be attached to the registration request in Inspira.

Course schedules

15. Students can search for language courses online by accessing the "my learning" page after they log in at https://inspira.un.org. See the annex for details.

Course or registration cancellation

16. A course that does not have the minimum number of students required may be cancelled before the beginning of a term. In such cases, students are notified in advance by the appropriate language coordinator.

17. Students have the option to cancel their registration before the term begins or at the beginning of the term. See the annex for details and applicable administrative fees in case of cancellation.

Procedures

18. Registration and registration-related correspondence for language classes and placement tests at Headquarters must be completed at https://inspira.un.org. No in-person registration is available.

19. The access to Inspira and the registration process are different for internal and external learners. See the annex for details.

Placement exams

20. A student must take a placement exam for a language if he or she is:

(a) A non-native speaker who is new to the programme and who has some knowledge of the language. Only beginners may enrol directly in level 1;

(b) A returning student who has not taken a course in that language in the programme for two consecutive terms or more.

21. Placement exam results are valid for two terms following the date of placement at a course level. The results of the exams will be available in Inspira (under "my learning"), and students shall register in the course level corresponding to their placement results. See the annex for details.

Maximum number of enrolments per term

22. To ensure the most effective language learning possible, the Language and Communications Programme encourages students to focus on one language at a time.

23. Students can register for up to two 12-week courses per term in up to two languages:

(a) Either one level course and one special course;

(b) Or two special courses.

24. Prior authorization from the head of the Language and Communications Programme is required to register within the same term for:

(a) Two level courses; or

(b) More than two 12-week courses (two 6-week courses may be considered equivalent to one 12-week course).

25. Work-related justifications for enrolment in multiple courses will be given priority consideration. Requests for more than one lunchtime course per day require prior approval from both the student's supervisor and the head of the Language and Communications Programme. Enrolment in multiple courses scheduled for the same or overlapping times is not possible.

26. Students are encouraged to complete all level courses in one language before taking a level course in another language.

Confirmation of enrolment

27. When enrolled, students receive a confirmation e-mail with all course details. **Only enrolled students are admitted into the course.** Students are responsible for updating their contact information in Inspira.

28. Students must enter the Inspira system regularly to check for updated notifications. See the annex for details.

Cancellation of enrolment

29. Cancellation deadlines depend on the type of language course and are indicated in the details of each course in Inspira. See the annex for details and applicable administrative fees.

Late arrival

30. No student may join a course:

(a) After the end of the first week of:

(i) A level 1 course;

(ii) An accelerated course;

(iii) A special course whose duration is less than 12 weeks;

(b) After the end of the second week of other courses.

See the annex for details.

Attendance and punctuality

31. Individual students are responsible for their attendance. They are expected to attend class on a regular basis and to complete the course assignments. Penalty fees may apply to students who fail a course if they have low attendance. See the annex for details.

32. In all cases, students are requested to inform their teacher in advance about late arrivals, early departures or absences. Teachers are under no obligation to provide any opportunity for students to make up work missed, especially when students have not given any prior notice.

Absenteeism and penalty fees

33. The incomplete attendance fee is billed only for one course even if the student is taking multiple courses. The penalty fee for both no-show and incomplete attendance is $100. This fee will be increased to $125 beginning in April 2013. See the annex for details.

34. Students may be charged both an incomplete attendance fee and a no-show fee for two separate courses per term.

No-show fee

35. The no-show fee is payable by students (except paying students) in all types of courses (regular, accelerated or special) when they registered for a class but did not attend and did not cancel their registration (through Inspira by the designated deadline) before classes began.

Incomplete attendance fee

36. The incomplete attendance fee is payable by students (except paying students) in all types of courses (regular, accelerated or special), unless otherwise authorized or waived, when

(a) They registered for a course but did not attend at least 75 per cent of the classes (regular and accelerated courses) and they failed the end-of-term examination; or

(b) They did not attend at least 65 per cent of the classes if it was a special course; or

(c) They did not take the end-of-term examination, even though they had good attendance and informed their teacher or coordinator in advance.

Penalty fee waiver

37. Both the no-show fee and the incomplete attendance fee are automatically waived if students leave a gap of two terms before returning to the language programme (in that case, students will be required to take a placement exam again). See the annex for details.

38. Students who owe an incomplete attendance fee and wish to register in one of the next two terms can request a waiver if they provide written justification such as medical or work-related reasons. Students must attach any related documents that may justify a waiver to their registration request in Inspira. Please note that any waiver request submitted in person or sent by e-mail will not be accepted.

Paying students

39. Fees for each course are based on the number of hours of lessons as follows:

72 hours (e.g. 6 hours per week for 12 weeks), $600

60 hours (e.g. 5 hours per week for 12 weeks), $550

48 hours (e.g. 4 hours per week for 12 weeks), $500

36 hours (e.g. 3 hours per week for 12 weeks), $450

30 hours (e.g. 2 hours and 30 minutes per week for 12 weeks), $400

24 hours (e.g. 2 hours per week for 12 weeks), $300

16-18 hours (e.g. 1 hour and 30 minutes per week for 12 weeks), $200

12 hours (e.g. 1 hour per week for 12 weeks), $150

6-8 hours (e.g. 1 hour per week for 6 weeks), $100

40. For some courses, United Nations official holidays may affect the total number of hours.

41. Unless students have a credit balance from one of the two previous terms (see below), proof of payment must be submitted with the registration request in Inspira. Students will not be able to register without providing proof of payment.

42. Payments due at the time of registration may include new fees for courses in the forthcoming term and outstanding fees due from any previous terms.

43. Paying students are not subject to penalty fees because they are required to pay full tuition upon registration. They must pay in full to repeat a course whatever the attendance situation. Neither a refund nor a credit for future terms will be issued.

Forms of payment

44. All paying students must make their payments at the Cashier's Office, located on the 20th floor of the Secretariat Building, between 10 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Cashier's Office accepts only cash or cheque (payable to the United Nations) as payment. Credit cards are not accepted. Students must note that payment is for the Language and Communications Programme. Students receive a proof of payment, which they must upload to their registration request in Inspira.

IV. Communications skills training

45. Communications skills training aims to improve work-related writing and presentation skills in the working languages of the Organization, namely English and French. This responds to the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the strategy for managing the Organization's human resources and other human resources management issues (see A/59/263).

46. Descriptions of the courses are provided in the Staff Development Programme booklet and on the Language and Communications Programme website at www.un.org/depts/OHRM/sds/lcp.

Eligibility

47. To participate in the communications skills training, students must have a high level of proficiency in the language and have work duties that allow him or her to immediately apply what they are learning. For example, to participate in a course on the principles of report writing, one must currently write United Nations reports.

Scheduling

48. Please note that writing courses may include a blend of both group lessons and individual tutoring sessions with the instructor.

49. Communications skills training may take place outside of the schedule for regular courses.

Department-requested training

50. Departments of the United Nations Secretariat with staff who perform writing or speaking tasks that are linked to specialized fields (such as economics, accounting, security, peacekeeping, international law or human rights) and that differ from those of other United Nations staff owing to specific guidelines, templates or other considerations can request the Language and Communications Programme to assist with the development of specialized work-related training. Financial participation from the requesting departments may be required. Further information can be obtained by contacting the coordinator of the relevant language programme.

V. Additional information

Participants in lunchtime courses

51. Staff members in New York are entitled to a one-hour lunch break, starting not earlier than 11.30 a.m. and ending not later than 3 p.m. The lunch break may be used for in-house training opportunities (e.g. a 60-minute language class).

Course materials

52. Course participants are responsible for purchasing any textbooks or other course materials, as instructed by the teacher or coordinator during the first week of the term. Required textbooks may be available for purchase under special arrangements with vendors or in the United Nations bookshop, located in room GA-032A in the General Assembly Building.

Assessment of learning

Regular and accelerated courses

53. End-of-term examinations or alternative forms of assessment of learning (such as continuous evaluation) are an integral and mandatory part of the regular and accelerated courses of the Language and Communications Programme. Students who do not take the form of assessment required to validate their level in a given course, even if they come to class on a regular basis within the term, will be subject to an incomplete attendance fee if they register for any language course in one of the next two terms. However, students may submit in advance an adequate written explanation to the appropriate coordinator if they are unable to undertake the assessment. The coordinator will then determine whether the work-related or unexpected reasons provided justify a make-up assessment or examination.

54. The dates and venues for the exams are made known at least two weeks in advance. End-of-term examinations are given after the last week of classes for regular and accelerated courses. On the date of the examination or the course assessment, students are advised to come at least 10 to 15 minutes earlier than the appointed time. No extra time will be given to latecomers at the end of the scheduled examination period.

55. To advance to the next level, students must pass both the written and oral components of the end-of-term examination (the minimum passing score is 65 points out of 100), or a continuous evaluation if offered. Participants who fail the examination may arrange to have a general discussion of the results by making an appointment with the appropriate language coordinator no later than two weeks after the end of term.

56. Students who choose to repeat a level without taking the final examination or an alternative form of assessment will be subject to an incomplete attendance fee.

57. Students who pass a level but choose to repeat it should inform their teacher or the appropriate coordinator accordingly at the end of the course period. Exceptions are granted for re-enrolment at the same level in the subsequent term only. Students will not be asked to take the final examination again and will be able to join the next level the following term without paying an incomplete attendance fee, unless the attendance requirement for the repeated course has not been met.

Special courses

58. The passing status of students registered in specialized courses is based on the level of attendance during the term (65 per cent minimum) and on evaluation criteria provided by the teacher at the beginning of the course. When the students pass, they may receive a special course grade and/or comments by the teacher.

Score reports

59. Results of course assessments will be posted and will be accessible to students in Inspira, from where they can print their score report.

Language proficiency examination

60. The United Nations language proficiency examination, administered by the Examination and Tests Section, is the official test of a staff member's knowledge of a language and may be taken both by participants who have completed the highest level of Language and Communications Programme regular courses in a language and by staff members who have achieved proficiency by other means. To find out more about the examination and how to apply to take the exam, students may go to www.un.org/exam/lpe.

VI. Enquiries

61. For general enquiries and information, students may contact the Language and Communications Programme:

(a) In person, Monday to Friday, at:

(i) The DC2 Building, room DC2-200 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.;

(ii) The North Lawn Building, room NL-2034B from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.;

(b) By e-mail, to languages@un.org;

(c) By phone, to Ms. Maria Catherina David-Dakay (Human Resources Assistant) or Mr. Joseph Vukas (Staff Development Assistant), at 917 367 2623.

62. For pedagogical enquiries or to arrange appointments, please contact:

Arabic Programme Coordinator: Ms. Samia Montasser, 212 963 9506

Chinese Programme Supervisor: Mr. Yong Ho, 212 963 2481

English Programme Coordinator: Ms. Kathryn Good, 212 963 3820

French Programme Coordinator: Mr. Jérôme Quentin, 917 367 2693

Russian Programme Supervisor: Ms. Alla Padalka, 212 963 7063

Spanish Programme Coordinator: Mr. Felipe Martín Sarachaga, 212 963 3329

63. For additional enquiries, contact:

Mr. Javier Zanon, Head of the Language and Communications Programme (zanon@un.org).

Annex

Additional information on the Language and Communications Programme based on the learning management system and Inspira: related issues

Role of the supervisor

1. Students are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor any plan to take language classes in the programme, to agree on a learning plan before submitting their registration.

2. Supervisors, taking into consideration the exigencies of service and the requests received from other staff members, are encouraged to consider approving requests for participation in lunchtime classes scheduled for more than 60 minutes as well as granting additional time to commute from the office to the location of the language class and to take 20 minutes for a quick meal before or after a language class. Staff members are requested to make arrangements, in collaboration with their supervisor, to compensate for time spent away from the office, beyond the traditional lunch break, to take part in a language training session.

Priority

3. Continuing students are given priority to register for the following term of a level course, to ensure that they can continue their studies (provided that they submit their registration before the deadlines and provide all required documentation, including payment of fees, if applicable).

4. When the number of registration applications for a special course is higher than the maximum allowed, priority is given to students who have not taken the course during the two previous terms.

Course schedules

5. Students can search for language courses online by accessing the "my learning" page after they log in at http ://inspira.un.org.

6. They can select the language and type of course they are interested in. A detailed description of the course is provided and includes, in particular, course objectives, prerequisites, names of teachers, location, days, hours, number of places available, and price per place (for eligible external learners).

7. Any change in the course details is reflected immediately in Inspira.

Course cancellations

8. A course that does not have the minimum number of students required may be cancelled before the beginning of a term and:

(a) Until the end of the second week of the course for all 12-week courses except level 1 and accelerated courses;

(b) Until the end of the first week of the course for other 12-week courses (level 1 and accelerated courses) and for special courses whose duration is less than 12 weeks.

Registration procedures

General information

9. Registration and registration-related correspondence for language classes and placement tests at Headquarters must be completed at https://inspira.un.org. No other means of registration is available.

10. The access to Inspira and the registration process are different for internal and external learners (see paras. 10 and 11 above). Internal learners can log in to Inspira using their index number. External learners must first register and create a login account. Technical assistance is provided at https://inspira.un.org through the "contact us" link. Detailed registration guidelines are available online from http://www.un.org/staffdevelopment/lcp.

11. Students are responsible for reading all registration guidelines, rules and policies in the present circular.

12. Prior to submitting their registration, students should take into consideration their work schedule, their status (internal/external learner, paying student/free of charge) and their previous experience with the Language and Communications Programme at Headquarters in the language for which they want to register (courses already completed, outstanding fees).

13. Students cannot request registration in two sections of the same course (same level and/or same content but at different times or different days) within the same term.

14. Submission of registration does not guarantee enrolment in a course. Failure to select courses with meeting times that do not overlap, to attach required documents, to meet eligibility criteria or to provide more information when requested may result in registration being delayed or rejected.

Placement exams

15. A student must take a placement exam for a language if he or she is a returning student who has not taken a course in that language in the programme for two consecutive terms or more.

16. Students who can provide proof of very high proficiency in a language may contact the coordinator of that language to request a written waiver of the requirement to take a placement exam; they must attach the waiver at the time of their registration in Inspira.

17. Students enrolled in a level course who miss or fail their end-of-term exam (or any alternative form of course assessment) cannot request to take a placement exam instead. They must reregister in the same level for any of the two subsequent terms.

Confirmation of enrolment

18. Due to consideration of priority placement, room availability and required last-minute changes, enrolment can be confirmed only at the end of the week preceding the beginning of a term.

19. When enrolled, students receive a confirmation e-mail with all course details. **Only enrolled students are admitted into the course.** Students are responsible for updating their contact information in Inspira.

20. Students must enter the Inspira system regularly to check for updated notifications. The status of enrolled students appears as "enrolled". When the status appears as "action requested", students are advised to read the comments provided and to take the appropriate action before registration deadlines.

21. When a course is cancelled, enrolled students are notified in advance by the appropriate language coordinator. The students may enrol in another similar course and the previous registration will be transferred accordingly.

Cancellation/change of enrolment by the student

22. To avoid paying a penalty fee, students are advised to cancel their registration:

(a) Before the end of the first week of:

(i) A level 1 course;

(ii) An accelerated course;

(iii) A special course whose duration is less than 12 weeks;

(b) Before the end of the second week of:

(i) A level 2 to 9 course;

(ii) A 12-week special course.

23. Since students are responsible for their own registration, the opportunities to change a course or level after enrolment are very limited. Students must first contact the appropriate language coordinator by e-mail and provide a work-related or medical reason.

24. If approved, changes in registration can be made only by the language administrators:

(a) Before the end of the first week of a level 1 course, an accelerated course or a special course whose duration is less than 12 weeks;

(b) Before the end of the second week of the other courses.

25. Any change of level or course is final.

26. After a cancellation or change of course or level by an enrolled student, a waitlisted student can be added to the class list. It is the responsibility of the students to verify their enrolment status in Inspira on a regular basis and, once enrolled, to catch up on the course contents and assignments. They will be considered as absent for the classes missed when they were on the waitlist. However, if their work schedule has changed or they consider that they cannot catch up with the course contents, waitlisted students may still cancel their enrolment with no penalties before the cancellation deadlines. The classes missed while on the waitlist will not be considered for the attendance requirements when determining any penalties.

Late arrival

27. Enrolled students who are unable to attend the first few days of class are advised to cancel their registration as soon as possible in order for other students to attend courses from the first day.

28. Students may inform their teacher or the appropriate language coordinator of their late arrival during the second week of the course at the latest (except for level 1 courses, accelerated courses or special courses whose duration is less than 12 weeks); however, the teacher or the appropriate language coordinator may reserve the right to refuse and may inform students that their enrolment is cancelled.

29. Even if students inform their teacher or the appropriate language coordinator of their late arrival, they will be considered absent for all the classes missed.

Punctuality

30. Punctuality of teachers and students is an important part of the learning programme and demonstrates students' and teachers' respect for one another. Students are expected to be present throughout the entire class, including the first 15 to 20 minutes of a class when language is introduced and explained and the last 15 to 20 minutes when language tasks are summarized and homework is provided. Students who regularly disregard the expectation of punctual attendance and class participation may, at the discretion of the Language and Communications Programme, be marked absent for the entire class and/or forfeit their priority registration for the following term.

Absenteeism and penalty fees

No-show fee

31. The no-show fee is payable by students (except paying students) in all types of courses (regular, accelerated or special) when they wish to register for a course but were enrolled in a course in one or both of the two previous terms and:

(a) They did not attend any class in that course, and;

(b) They did not cancel their registration in due time, and;

(c) They did not, before or within the first week of classes (regardless of when their course started in the term), inform their teacher or the appropriate language coordinator by e-mail of their planned absence.

32. The no-show fee is charged only once per student per term, even if it may apply to more than one course in which the student was enrolled.

33. The no-show fee of $100 will increase to $125 beginning in April 2013. For payment particulars, see paragraph 44 of the circular.

Incomplete attendance fee

34. The incomplete attendance fee is payable by students (except paying students) in all types of courses (regular, accelerated or special) when they wish to register for a course but were enrolled in a course in one or both of the two previous terms, and:

(a) They attended less than 75 per cent of the classes for that course (65 per cent if it was a special course) and, in the case of regular and accelerated courses, they failed the end-of-term examination;

(b) They did not take the end-of-term examination, even though they had good attendance and even if they informed their teacher or coordinator in advance.

35. The incomplete attendance fee is charged only once per student per term, even if it may apply to more than one course.

36. The incomplete attendance fee of $100 will increase to $125 beginning in April 2013. For payment particulars, see paragraph 44 of the circular.

37. Students may be charged both an incomplete attendance fee and a no-show fee for two separate courses per term.

Penalty fee waiver

38. Both the no-show fee and the incomplete attendance fee are automatically waived if students leave a gap of two terms before returning to the language programme (in that case, students will be required to take a placement exam again).

39. Students who owe a no-show fee and wish to register in one of the next two terms cannot request a waiver for any reason since their failure to provide notification of their absence prevented the coordinators from contacting waitlisted students.

40. Students who owe an incomplete attendance fee and wish to register in one of the next two terms can request a waiver if they provide any of the following:

(a) A sick leave certificate;

(b) A copy of a mission assignment that they were not aware of at registration time (certification from the supervisor may be required);

(c) An official letter or e-mail from a supervisor (clearly indicating the supervisor's title and contact information; notes verbales are not accepted) explaining that the student had a change in work assignments that interfered with his/her ability to attend class.

41. All waiver requests, for all courses within the same term to which they may apply, must cover the entire period of absence in the case of consecutive absences (namely, mission, sick leave, etc.) or should provide a detailed explanation in the case of several non-consecutive absences (namely, change in work assignments, sick leave, etc.).

42. Students must attach any related documents that may justify a waiver to their registration request in Inspira. Any waiver request submitted in person or sent by e-mail will not be accepted.